

Module 21:

Making Effective Referrals

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Overview

Introduction

This module will show you how to make effective referrals.

Learning Objectives

After completing this module the CNW will be able to:

- assess a participant's need for referral(s)
 - identify sources of information that could indicate a referral need
 - prioritize* referrals
 - identify key elements of an effective referral
 - show how to locate referrals in the community for common participant needs
 - identify barriers that can affect a participant's ability to follow through with a referral and ways to address these barriers
 - explain the importance of updating referral information
 - describe how to update referral information,
 - explain how to document referrals
 - problem solve when there is no referral agency to meet the participant's needs
-

Words that you may not know are **underlined. Definitions for these words can be found in the **Glossary** at the end of the module. (Note: Words are only underlined the first few times they appear in the text.)*

Referrals

Definition

Making a referral is an action that is taken when a participant has a need that cannot be met by the local WIC agency. Making a referral is helping the participant find the community services that may help him/her meet those needs.

Why Are Referrals Needed?

WIC participants may have non-nutrition-related problems or needs. (For example, a WIC participant may want help finding housing.) Making referrals is how WIC helps participants resolve these problems or needs.

By helping participants find the help they need, you increase the chance that s/he will improve her/his quality of life.

Referral Process

Referral Procedures

Most local WIC agencies have established procedures for making a referral. Your local agency will probably have procedures similar to the process described below.

7-Step Process

Making referrals is a 7-step process. The steps are:

1. assessment,
 2. prioritization,
 3. selection,
 4. preparation,
 5. giving information,
 6. follow-up, and
 7. maintenance.
-

Chart Process

The chart on the next page describes each of the referral steps in detail and gives examples.

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Referral Process (continued)

The 7-Step Referral Process

Step & Description	Example
1. Assessment Identifying what kind of help the participant needs.	<i>Maria Garcia says she wants help with her English and that her husband has not been sending child support payments.</i>
2. Prioritization Identifying what the participant's most "pressing need is.	<i>Not getting child support has been very hard on Maria. She tells you that learning English is not as important right now.'</i>
3. Selection Identifying the community agency/resource that may help meet the participant's need.	<i>The local District Attorney's office and a local child support enforcement service may be able to help Maria.</i>
4. Preparation Getting the participant ready for the referral by helping her/him deal with the feelings about asking for help.	<i>Maria is worried about what her friends and family will think if she asks for help. The WIC staff person tells her that she is not alone and that many participants have similar worries.</i>
5. Giving Information Giving the participant the name of the agency & information about the agency.	<i>The WIC person gives Maria a flyer from Positive Collections, a local child support enforcement agency, and tells her about its services.</i>
6. Follow-up Checking with the participant, referral agency, &/or other staff to see if the participant used the service & how things went or why the service was not used.	<i>At Maria's next appointment, the WIC staff person asks her how things went with Positive Collections.</i>
7. Maintenance Checking to see if the agency is still in business, if there are any changes in its services, & checking on the quality of the agency's services.	<i>Every 6 months a staff person calls Positive Collections to see if their services have changed. The local agency updates staff on referral agencies at monthly staff meetings.</i>

Assessment

Definition

Assessment is identifying a participant's needs.

Types of Needs

There are several types of participant needs. They are:

- basic,
 - legal/public safety,
 - education/employment,
 - family issues,
 - health care, and
 - mental health.
-

Identifying the Help Needed

The first step in making referrals is to identify the kind of help the participant needs. You will do this by getting information from:

- forms (such as nutrition questionnaires),
 - needs and concerns mentioned by the participant/parent/guardian,
 - community agency staff (such as a public health nurse),
 - interviews with the participant/parent/guardian, and/or
 - observations of the participant/parent/guardian or family members.
-

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Assessment (continued)

Getting Information from Forms

WIC has several forms that can help you identify a participant's needs and concerns. You can get information about a participant from:

- WIC application forms,
 - WIC referral forms,
 - nutrition questionnaires, and
 - WIC supplemental questions in AIM.
-

Chart

The chart on the next page lists some possible sources from which you can get participant information and what to look for. Check with your mentor or supervisor to see what your local agency uses.

Learning Activity 1

To learn more about how to assess participant needs you may want to try **Learning Activity 1** found at the end of this module.

Assessment (continued)

Identifying Participant Needs

Source	What to look for
WIC Application Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Income• Family size• Age & gender of children• Other services family receives• Housing situations
WIC Referral Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Height• Weight• Hemoglobin• Medical information from provider
Nutritional Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What foods are eaten• How much & how often food is eaten• How food is prepared• Supplements used• Medical risks• Pregnancy history
WIC Supplemental Questions in AIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical risks• Pregnancy history• Family situation• Alcohol use• Drug use
AIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall growth pattern• Sudden weight loss or gain• Weight to height ratio• Risks
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dietary habits• Medical history• Children's immunization history• Family planning practices• Family situation• Services family receives

Prioritization

Several Needs

A participant often has several needs.

These problems may change over time. The participant may have solved problems s/he identified at an earlier appointment and have some new problems now.

Prioritization

Prioritization is helping the participant identify her/his most “pressing” need and dealing with this need first.

Participant Makes the Decision

A participant may not prioritize her/his needs the same way you would. You can make suggestions and provide guidance, but the participant must make the final decision.

How to Prioritize

Generally, needs can be prioritized in the following order:

1. emergencies
 2. basic needs
 3. other needs
-

Emergencies

Emergency needs include:

- life threatening situations
- child abuse
- family violence
- disaster services
- public safety
- sexual assault
- suicide prevention

You may need to call 9-1-1 for these situations. Check with your agency to see what services are available for these situations in your community.

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Prioritization (continued)

Basic Needs

Basic needs include:

- money
- food
- housing
- transportation
- utilities (such as electricity and water)

These are basic to live. A person needs all of these.

Other Needs

Other needs are those needs that are not considered emergencies or basic needs. Medical care and childcare are examples of needs that are called “Other Needs”.

Learning Activity 2

To learn more about prioritizing needs you may want to try **Learning Activity 2** found at the end of this module.

Selection

Identifying Community Resources

Once the participant has identified and prioritized her/his need(s), you will identify the community resource(s) that may help her/him.

You will need to be familiar with the community resources in your area to select the agency that may best meet the needs of the participant. To learn more about the resources in your community, see the Module on *Community Referrals*

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Preparation

Definition

Preparing the participant for referral is helping the participant:

- understand the importance of the referral and
 - deal with her/his feelings about getting help.
-

Understanding the Importance of a Referral

The participant may not always know what help is available to her/him. Explain how a referral can help the participant.

Dealing with the Participant's Feelings

Asking for help is often one of the most difficult things a person has to do.

Participants often have feelings that may prevent them from asking for help. Some common feelings include:

- shame
- fear
- sense of powerlessness
- distrust

Cultural beliefs may greatly influence how a participant views asking for help.

Use active listening skills to identify what the participant is feeling.

Establish Trust

The participant will need to feel that s/he can trust you before s/he will accept a referral. You can show a positive regard for and genuine interest in the participant by restating the participant's comments and feelings.

Giving Information

Referral Procedures

Most local WIC agencies have established procedures for giving participants referral information. Your local agency will probably have procedures similar to the procedure described below.

Agency Information

When making a referral, you will give the participant **general** information such as:

- name of the agency
- phone number
- address

You will also give **specific** information about the agency's services such as:

- description of services provided
 - service hours open
 - fees
 - language(s) spoken
 - eligibility
 - application process
-

Follow-up

Participant Makes the Decision

Once you have given the participant the agency name, phone number and any other important information, it is **up to the participant to contact the agency**.

Each participant does what s/he feels most comfortable doing. Not every participant will contact the referral agency.

Outcome of the Referral

Your local agency will want to know the outcome of referrals. Check with your local agency to see how it handles follow-up on referrals.

Your agency may follow-up at the participant's next appointment. At this appointment, the WIC staff person may ask the participant if s/he used the referral service.

If the participant used the service:

- Give positive feedback, such as, *"That took a lot of courage; I am glad you were able to follow through."*
- Check to see how things went. Ask a question such as, *"How did things go for you?"*

If the participant did not use the service:

- Check to see why s/he did not use the service. Ask a question such as, *"Tell me more about why you did not use the service."*

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Follow-up (continued)

Barriers

There are several reasons why a participant may not follow through with a referral. These reasons include:

- fear
 - embarrassment
 - not enough time
 - lack of transportation
 - lack of child care
 - language barriers
 - cultural background
 - lack of money
-

Addressing Barriers

To make effective referrals you will need to address the barriers that may affect the participant's ability to follow through with a referral.

To address any of the barriers, use good listening skills. Ask the participant how s/he plans to use the referral. Listen to the participant and identify any barriers that may prevent the participant from using the referral.

Help the participant figure out how s/she can address barriers. You do not have to have the answers. Guide the participant so that s/he solves her/his own problems.

Suggestions to Address Barriers

The chart on the next page gives some suggestions on how to address some of the barriers.

Follow-Up (continued)

Addressing Barriers

Barrier	Suggestions
Fear	Let the participant know that many people are afraid of asking for help.
Embarrassment	Explain that many WIC participants have been referred to this service and that only a few people will know that a referral was made.
Not Enough Time	If the participant says s/he is too busy, check to see if the referral is truly a priority. If not, reprioritize. If so, problem-solve with the participant.
Lack of Transportation	Offer information on public transportation assistance or make a referral to an agency that provides transportation assistance.
Lack of Child Care	Let the participant know that some agencies provide childcare. Problem solve when needed.
Language Barriers	Make sure the referral can provide services in the participant's primary language. If not, make sure you tell the participant.
Cultural Background	Make sure the referral agency is sensitive to the needs of people from various cultures.
Money	If the referral agency charges a fee, make sure you tell participant.

Maintenance

Maintaining the Referral Base

Maintaining an agency's referral base involves checking if the agency:

- is still in business
 - has changed its services
 - provides quality services
-

Updating Referral Information

Your local agency probably updates referral information regularly. It does this by making sure that the following agency information is correct:

- agency name
 - address
 - telephone number
 - contact person(s)
 - type(s) of services provided
 - eligibility requirements
 - service area
 - agency caseload or capacity
 - guidelines for referring WIC participants
-

New Agencies

New agencies may open up in your area. Your local agency will need to check to see:

- what services the new agency provides
- if the agency's services may be useful to WIC participants
- if the agency has quality staff and services
- if the agency will be able to handle referrals from your local WIC agency

Only make a referral to a new agency if your local agency has decided to use the agency for referrals.

You may get information about new agencies from:

- other WIC staff
 - other community agencies
 - community meetings
 - the media
 - local newsletters
-

Documenting Referrals

Required Documentation

Some agencies that you refer participants to may require a written referral.

Written Referrals

A written referral is a form or other document that is given to the participant. It may include:

- the date
 - participant's name, birth date, address or phone number
 - the reason for the referral
 - name of agency to whom participant is being referred
 - referring person's signature, agency name and phone number
-

Documentation in AIM

Check to see how your agency documents referrals in AIM.

Learning Activity 3

To learn more about how referrals are made at your local agency you may want to try **Learning Activity 3** found at the end of this module.

Learning Activity 4

To learn more about how to make effective referrals you may want to try **Learning Activity 4** found at the end of this module.

Summary

Making a Referral

Making a referral is identifying the participant's needs that cannot be addressed by the local WIC agency and helping the participant find the community services that may help her/him meet those needs.

7-Step Process

Making referrals is a 7-step process. The steps are:

1. assessment
 2. prioritization
 3. selection
 4. preparation
 5. giving information
 6. follow-up
 7. maintenance
-

Assessment

The first step in making referrals is to identify the kind of help the participant needs. You will do this by getting information from:

- forms
 - needs and concerns mentioned by the participant/parent/guardian
 - observations of the participant/parent/guardian or family members
-

Prioritization

Prioritization is helping the participant identify her/his most "pressing" need(s).

Selection

Once the participant has identified and prioritized her/his need(s), you will identify the community resource(s) that may be able to help her/him.

Continued on next page

Summary (continued)

Preparation

Preparing the participant for a referral is helping the participant:

- understand the importance of the referral and
 - deal with her/his feelings about getting help.
-

Giving Information

When making a referral, you will give the participant **general** information such as:

- name of the agency
- phone number
- address

You will also give **specific** information about the agency's services.

Follow-Up

Once you have given the participant the referral information, it is **up to the participant to contact the agency**. Not every participant will contact the referral agency.

At the participant's next appointment ask if s/he used the referral service.

Maintenance

Maintaining an agency's referral base involves checking if the agency:

- is still in business
- has changed its services
- provides quality services

Your local agency's referral base should be updated regularly.

Glossary

assessment – Assessment is identifying a participant's needs.

making a referral - Making a referral is an action taken when the participant's needs cannot be met by the local WIC agency. Making a referral is helping the participant find the community services that may help her/him meet those needs.

prioritization – Prioritization is helping the participant identify her/his most “pressing” need and dealing with this first.

referral base – The referral base is the list of referral agencies that the local agency uses to make referrals to participants.

role play – A role play is when 2 or more people act out a scene as though it was “real life”. “Props” such as baby dolls or food models are not needed but may be helpful.

written referral –A written referral is a form or other document that is given to the participant and that often includes the date, the participant's name, birth date, address or phone number, the reason for the referral, name of agency to whom participant is being referred, and the referring person's signature, agency name or phone number.

Progress Check

1. Match the step of the referral process to its description

Step	Description
_____ Assessment	A. Helping the participant identify her/his most “pressing need(s).
_____ Prioritization	B. Helping the participant understand the importance of the referral and deal with feelings about getting help.
_____ Selection	C. Identifying what resources may be able to help the participant.
_____ Preparation	D. Finding out if the participant used the services of the referral agency.
_____ Giving Information	E. Regularly checking if the agency is still in business, has changed its services, and provides quality services.
_____ Follow-Up	F. Giving general and specific information about an agency.
_____ Maintenance	G. Identifying the needs of the participant.

2. Put a check mark (✓) before any of the appropriate activities that could help you identify a participant’s needs.

_____ reviewing forms filled out by the participant

_____ listening to the participant describe her/his life

_____ observing the participant’s interaction with others

_____ calling the participant’s home and asking other family members if there are any problems

Progress Check (continued)

3. Identify the following needs as “E” for Emergency, “B” for Basic, and “O” for Other.

_____ boyfriend is violent
_____ does not own a car
_____ wants to get GED
_____ has teenage daughter who is doing poorly in school
_____ neighbor has kidnapped participant's daughter

4. Prioritize the following participant's needs as “1”, “2”, or “3”, with “1” being the most important.

_____ will be evicted from apartment in 2 days
_____ has suicidal feelings
_____ children are not up-to-date with immunizations

5. Participants often have feelings that may prevent them from asking for help. List 2 feelings that a participant may have about asking for help.

Progress Check (continued)

6. Put a check mark (✓) before the information that may be given when a referral is made.

_____ name of the agency
_____ history of the agency
_____ agency's tax ID number
_____ agency's phone number
_____ description of agency's services
_____ list of agency staff
_____ agency's service hours

7. Put a check mark (✓) before any of the reasons why a participant may not follow through with a referral.

_____ fear
_____ not enough time
_____ participant could not afford agency's fees
_____ participant was denied services because agency does not serve WIC participants
_____ agency did not provide services in the participant's primary language

Progress Check (continued)

8. Put a check mark (✓) before any of the ways that your agency may get information about new agencies.

_____ from other communities

_____ a community meetings

_____ articles in the newspaper

_____ letters from new agencies

_____ contacting the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)

_____ contacting a local bank

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Learning Activities

The following activities are included and are recommended for interactive learning:

- Learning Activity 1: Assessing Needs
- Learning Activity 2: Prioritizing Needs
- Learning Activity 3: Observations
- Learning Activity 4: Role Plays

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Activity 1: Assessing Needs

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity the CNW will be able to:

- Identify participant needs/problems
-

Instructions

1. Read each of the 3 case studies on the following pages.
 2. For each of the participants described, identify and list the needs/problems.
 3. When you are finished, discuss your findings with your supervisor.
-

Continued on next page

Activity 1: Assessing Needs (Continued)

Case Study 1:

Hwa Kong is 23 years old. She is in her first trimester of pregnancy. She tells you she has not gone to the doctor because she has no health insurance. She is 5 feet 6 inches tall and weighs 125 pounds. She has not gained any weight since she became pregnant.

Hwa's 4 year old son is deaf. She says he understands what is going on but is not able to communicate much.

Hwa's husband works part-time in a family-owned grocery store. He earns \$600 a month.

Needs/Problems:

Activity 1: Assessing Needs (Continued)

Case Study 2:

Rosanna Garcia is 15 years old. She is in her last trimester of pregnancy.

Rosanna has a boyfriend that drinks. He often beats her when he is drunk. Rosanna says she wants to leave him, but has nowhere to go. She says she has felt like killing herself because things have been so bad.

Rosanna works part-time as a cashier for a department store. She earns \$500/month. She has no health insurance.

Needs/Problems:

Activity 1: Assessing Needs (Continued)

Case Study 3:

Keishari Johnson has 3 children. Danielle is 9 months old, Johnny is 2 years, and Alita is 4 years old.

Keishari is living in an apartment. She tells you she is not sure she can pay next month's rent. Her boyfriend moved out last month and now she has to pay the rent herself. She tells you her boyfriend does not pay any child support. She does get Food Stamps but has not applied for AHCCCS.

Needs/Problems:

Activity 2: Prioritizing Needs

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity the CNW will be able to:

- prioritize needs/problems.
-

Instructions

1. Read each of the 3 case studies on the following pages.
 2. For each case study:
 - identify the participant's needs/problems
 - list these needs/problems
 - label these needs/problems as "emergency", "basic", or "other".
 3. When you are finished, discuss your findings with your supervisor.
-

Activity 2: Prioritizing Needs (Continued)

Case Study 1:

May Nguyen is 18 years old. May, her husband Sam, and 3-month old daughter live with her aunt. May looks pale and coughs frequently.

May speaks limited English. The interpreter tells you:

- May's uncle recently died of tuberculosis.
- They have not gone to a doctor because they do not have health insurance.
- May wants to get on Food Stamps.
- May wants to learn English.

Needs/Problems:	Emergency	Basic	Other

Activity 2: Prioritizing Needs (Continued)

Case Study 2:

Joyce Webber is a 19-year old single mother of 3-month old Jessica. Joyce and Jessica recently relocated to Arizona to “get away from the past.”

Joyce used drugs in her past, including the time she was pregnant with Jessica. Joyce tells you that Jessica seems to be having some developmental problems. Joyce is not familiar with the services available for high-risk/special needs infants in Arizona.

Jessica has several bruises on her face and possible burn marks on her legs. You suspect someone may be abusing Jessica.

Joyce wants to get on TANF and Food Stamps.

Needs/Problems:	Emergency	Basic	Other

Activity 2: Prioritizing Needs (Continued)

Case Study 3:

Cassandra Clark is pregnant. She and her husband David have 2 boys. Darius is 15 months old and Derrick is 3 years old.

The Clark's are having money problems. David was fired from his job 2 months ago and is still unemployed. They sold their car last month to get some cash to pay the rent and other bills. They will soon need some financial assistance but are not sure what help is available.

Cassandra and David are worried about Darius. He has been sick for the last 5 days. He has had a fever, diarrhea and vomiting. They have not gone to the doctor because they do not have health insurance.

Needs/Problems:	Emergency	Basic	Other

Activity 3: Observations

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity the CNW will be able to:

- explain how her/his local agency makes referrals

Instructions

1. Have your supervisor explain how your agency makes referrals. Make sure to ask her/him how mandatory referrals are made.
 2. Have your supervisor arrange for you to observe several individual nutrition education sessions.
 3. Observe the staff person as s/he:
 - Assesses the participant's needs/problems,
 - Prioritizes these needs/problems,
 - Makes referral(s), including mandatory referrals,
 - Documents referral(s).
 4. Write down your notes on the next page.
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Activity 3: Observations (Continued)

Notes:

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Activity 4: Role Play

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity the CNW will be able to:

- make an effective referral
- problem-solve when no referral agency exists to meet the participant's needs

Background

A role play is a scenario in which 2 or more people act out a scene as though it was “real life”. Props are not needed but may be helpful.

Instructions

1. Ask your supervisor or a co-worker to role play any 3 or the 5 participant roles (A-E) described on the following page.
 2. Using the information and skills you have learned in this module, act out the role of a WIC Nutrition Assistant in a session with each of the 3 participants.
 3. Supervisor/Co-Worker: Using the role plays as your guide, act out the role of the participant. Try to be as realistic as possible.
 4. After each session, ask your co-worker to tell you what s/he noticed. Make sure to ask for your strengths as well as weaknesses.
-

Activity 4: Role Plays (Continued)

5 Participants

Role A LaTasha Webber is a 16-year old pregnant teen living with her boyfriend. He does not know that she is pregnant. She has not gone to a doctor since she became pregnant. She is worried; she had some bleeding last night. She has some bruises on her right arm and a huge bruise around her eye. She says, "I fell down the stairs last night." She says her boyfriend is waiting for her in the waiting room.

Role B Anna Juarez is a single mother of 18-month old Maya. Anna is quiet and appears depressed. Anna's husband died last month. He had AIDS. She says she can hardly take care of Maya. She works the night shift at a senior retirement center. She drops Maya off at her sister's while she's at work. She is worried about keeping her job since her sister will be moving to Nevada next month.

Role C Tammi Green is 26 years old. She and her husband Robert have 3-month old twins. They are currently living in a shelter. A week ago a fire destroyed their apartment. All their belongings were destroyed in the fire. They are unsure what to do.

Role D Joy Vanderwetering is a 21-year old, non-breastfeeding mother of 2-month old Jacob. Her ex-husband is not paying child support. She currently lives with her mother. Her mother helps out by paying for formula and diapers.

Role E Karla Flynn is a 31-year old single mother of Ray, a 2-month old and Samantha, a 15-month old. Karla was recently evicted from her apartment. She says Samantha is "out of control" and does not know what to do with her.

Progress Check Answers

1. Match the step of the referral process to its description

Step	Description
<u> G </u> Assessment	A. Helping the participant identify her/his most “pressing need(s).
<u> A </u> Prioritization	B. Helping the participant understand the importance of the referral and deal with feelings about getting help.
<u> C </u> Selection	C. Identifying what resources may be able to help the participant.
<u> B </u> Preparation	D. Finding out if the participant used the services of the referral agency.
<u> F </u> Giving Information	E. Regularly checking if the agency is still in business, has changed its services, and provides quality services.
<u> D </u> Follow-Up	F. Giving general and specific information about an agency.
<u> E </u> Maintenance	G. Identifying the needs of the participant.

2. Put a check mark (✓) before any of the appropriate activities that could help you identify a participant’s needs.

 ✓ reviewing forms filled out by the participant

 ✓ listening to the participant describe her/his life

 ✓ observing the participant’s interaction with others

 calling the participant’s home and asking other family members if there are any problems

Progress Check (continued)

3. Identify the following needs as “E” for Emergency, “B” for Basic, and “O” for Other.

 E boyfriend is violent
 B does not own a car
 O wants to get GED
 O has teenage daughter who is doing poorly in school
 E neighbor has kidnapped participant’s daughter

4. Prioritize the following participant’s needs as “1”, “2”, or “3”, with “1” being the most important.

 2 will be evicted from apartment in 2 days
 1 has suicidal feelings
 3 children are not up-to-date with immunizations

5. Participants often have feelings that may prevent them from asking for help. List 2 feelings that a participant may have about asking for help.

Any 2 of the following are acceptable:

- ***shame***
- ***fear***
- ***sense of powerlessness***
- ***distrust***

Progress Check (continued)

6. Put a check mark (✓) before the information that may be given when a referral is made.

☒ name of the agency
☐ history of the agency
☐ agency's tax ID number
☒ agency's phone number
☒ description of agency's services
☐ list of agency staff
☒ agency's service hours

7. Put a check mark (✓) before any of the reasons why a participant may not follow through with a referral.

☒ fear
☒ not enough time
☒ participant could not afford agency's fees
☐ participant was denied services because agency does not serve WIC participants
☒ agency did not provide services in the participant's primary language

Progress Check (continued)

8. Put a check mark (✓) before any of the ways that your agency may get information about new agencies.

☒ from other communities

☒ a community meetings

☒ articles in the newspaper

☒ letters from new agencies

☐ contacting the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)

☐ contacting a local bank